In the Claims:

1.   (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method of using a computerized virtual business model to transact business for a product, comprising:

providing a ~~plurality of~~ computer-implemented ~~virtual alliances for the manufacture and distribution of the product~~virtual manufacturer alliance comprising a plurality of manufacturer alliance members, every member of said manufacturer virtual alliance being configured to perform operations associated with manufacturing of said product;

providing a computer-implemented virtual distributor alliance comprising a plurality of virtual distributor alliance members, every virtual distributor alliance member being configured to perform operations associated with distribution of the manufactured product;

providing a plurality of computer-implemented virtual flows for enabling electronic communication between the ~~plurality of~~ virtual alliances for use in the manufacture and distribution of the product, the virtual flows having access to the virtual alliances at each stage of the manufacture and distribution of the product, the virtual flows managing a flow of information along the virtual flows between alliance members;

providing a contracting business for coordinati~~ng~~ng operations of~~among~~ the virtual alliances; and

using the contracting business to establish, via the virtual flows, control over the manufacture and distribution of the product by the plurality of virtual alliances.

2.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing a computer-implemented virtual material alliance comprising at least one virtual material alliance member, every virtual material alliance member being configured to perform operations associated with supplying materials to manufacturer alliance members to be used by the manufacturer alliance

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members to manufacture said product~~wherein the providing the plurality of virtual~~ ... ... ~~alliances includes providing a material alliance.~~

3. Deleted.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~the providing the plurality of~~each ~~virtual~~computer-implemented virtual distributor alliances member ~~includes~~ corresponds to providing a computer-implemented virtual warehouse ~~alliance~~.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the providing the plurality of virtual flows includes providing a material and product flow.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the providing the plurality of virtual flows includes providing an information flow.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the providing the plurality of virtual flows includes providing a financial flow.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the using the contracting business includes establishing configurable control points in the information flow for facilitating communications by the contracting business.

9. (Original) The method of claim 6, further including establishing virtual regional hubs on the information flow for coordinating the manufacture and distribution of the product for customers in particular geographic locations.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the providing the plurality of virtual flows includes providing financial and information flows, and further including using the financial flow integrated with the information flow to

automatically trigger financial transactions relating to the manufacture and distribution of the product.

11. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented virtual business model to transact business for a product, comprising:

a ~~plurality of~~ computer-implemented virtual manufacturer alliances comprising a plurality of computer-implemented virtual manufacturer alliance members, ~~f~~every virtual manufacturer alliance member being configured to perform operations associated with distributing the manufactured product ~~or the manufacture and distribution of the product~~;

a computer-implemented virtual distributor alliance comprising a plurality of virtual distributor alliance members, every virtual distributor alliance member being configured to perform operations associated with distribution of the manufactured product;

a plurality of computer-implemented virtual flows for enabling electronic communication between the plurality of virtual alliances for use in the manufacture and distribution of the product, the virtual flows having access to the virtual alliances at each stage of the manufacture and distribution of the product, the virtual flows managing a flow of information along the virtual flows between alliance members; and

a contracting business for coordination among the virtual alliances, wherein the contracting business establishes, via the virtual flows, control over the manufacture and distribution of the product by the plurality of virtual alliances.

12. (Currently Amended) The virtual business model of claim 11, further comprising:

a computer-implemented virtual material alliance comprising at least one virtual material alliance member, every virtual material alliance member being configured to perform operations associated with supplying materials to manufacturer alliance members to be used by the manufacturer alliance

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members to manufacture said product ~~wherein the plurality of virtual alliances includes a material alliance~~.

13. Deleted.

14. (Currently Amended) The virtual business model of claim 11, wherein each computer-implemented virtual distributor alliance member corresponds to ~~the plurality of virtual alliances includes a~~ virtual warehouse ~~alliance~~.

15. (Original) The virtual business model of claim 11 wherein the plurality of virtual flows includes a material and product flow.

16. (Original) The virtual business model of claim 11 wherein the plurality of virtual flows includes an information flow.

17. (Original) The virtual business model of claim 11 wherein the plurality of virtual flows includes a financial flow.

18. (Original) The virtual business model of claim 11, further including configurable control points in the information flow for facilitating communications by the contracting business.

19. (Original) The virtual business model of claim 16, further including virtual regional hubs on the information flow for coordinating the manufacture and distribution of the product for customers in particular geographic locations.

20. (Original) The virtual business model of claim 11 wherein the plurality of virtual flows includes financial and information flows, and further including financial transactions automatically triggered by the financial flow, integrated with the information flow, and relating to the manufacture and distribution of the product.